

VZCZCXRO3097  
PP RUEHMR RUEHRN  
DE RUEHKI #1153/01 2000915  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 190915Z JUL 06  
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4408  
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE  
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KINSHASA 001153

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/19/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#) [ELECTIONS](#)  
SUBJECT: DRC ELECTIONS: LAST-MINUTE ANNOUNCEMENTS ADDING TO  
VOTERS' CONFUSION

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) announced July 15 that it has been able to verify some 24.4 million legitimately registered voters in the DRC, a number slightly below the original figure of 25.7 million. The CEI has estimated, however, that those 1.27 million "missing" voters have fallen off voters lists because of technical problems with registration equipment. As such, those "omitted" voters will still be allowed to vote in the July 30 elections. The CEI, meanwhile, continues to respond to allegations that it is trying to commit electoral fraud by printing five million "extra" presidential ballots. While reasonable explanations exist for these and other concerns about the electoral process, the Electoral Commission has not responded in an adequate or timely fashion, thereby allowing rumors to establish themselves as presumed facts in the political discourse. End summary.

-----  
THE CASE OF THE "MISSING" VOTERS  
-----

¶2. (U) The CEI July 15 announced the publication of the DRC's voter lists after a months-long compilation and review of all registered voters for cases of fraud or double registration. The CEI reported it has been able to verify 24,440,410 legitimately registered voters throughout the country. Previously, the CEI announced that following the end of voter registration earlier this year, 25,712,552 Congolese had registered as voters. (Note: It was this larger number on which the Parliament decided to base the distribution of the 500 National Assembly seats. End note). CEI officials explained the difference in figures (1.27 million voters, roughly five percent of the original total) resulted from technical problems with some of the compact discs on which voter registration information was stored. Consequently, the CEI has estimated that 877,673 voters (who registered at 1,029 centers) are presumed to be missing from voter lists because some registration information was unreadable from the CDs. In addition, the CEI reported that 394,469 voters (who enrolled at 142 centers) are not on the voter lists because the CDs from those centers could not be accessed.

¶3. (SBU) The CEI also announced it had identified 292,353 cases of potential fraud among the previous number of registered voters. CEI officials have not provided figures as to how many among this number are cases of double registration or are otherwise fraudulent. (Note: The CEI has identified cases of military personnel and foreigners having registered to vote, both of which are prohibited under Congolese law, but the exact number is yet unknown. End

note.) For reasons unknown, however, the CEI has not officially reduced the total number of registered voters to reflect the existence of these "irregular" voters. Officials with MONUC's Electoral Division similarly could not explain why the CEI included the 292,353 voters in its new total of 24.4 million.

14. (C) To deal with the 1.27 million voters whose names will not appear on voter lists, the CEI has authorized the creation of "listes des omis" (lists of the omitted) or special voting lists on voting day. These lists, which are now being printed, will be sent only to those voting stations where voter registration data was missing or incomplete. In a special process, these "missing" voters can present their voter identification cards and cast ballots on election day. Poll workers will have to cross-check the information on the voter ID cards with that on the specially-generated lists to allow such electors to vote. It is not known where the majority of sites will be that will use the special voters lists, but CEI officials have privately said most cases will be in the provinces of Equateur and Bandundu, which experienced significant delays and logistical problems during the voter registration period. In any case, the CEI will treat all ballots cast as equal and legitimate, and all those with voter ID cards will be allowed to vote, regardless of whether a voter appeared on the original voters list or "liste des omis."

-----  
THE MYSTERIOUS "EXTRA" BALLOTS  
-----

15. (U) Another issue which has been the cause of considerable misunderstanding and debate among voters and the political

KINSHASA 00001153 002 OF 003

class is that of five million "extra" presidential ballots printed by the CEI. CEI President Abbe Apollinaire Malu Malu explained during the course of a June meeting between the CEI and many of the 33 presidential candidates that the CEI had printed 30 million ballots. Understanding that the number of registered voters is around 25 million, some candidates and other political parties charged the CEI with attempting to commit fraud by printing five million extra ballots that could be used later to favor another candidate (namely, President Kabila). Malu Malu has explained -- often repeatedly, without much success in achieving understanding -- that there are not five million extra ballots, and that the existence of supplemental ballots conforms to international election norms. (Note: A point substantiated by the Carter Center in a recent announcement. End note.)

16. (U) Malu Malu said the number of ballots printed was based on the number of planned voting sites and the average number of voters expected at each site. Throughout the DRC, there will be a total of 49,746 voting sites -- 8,518 of which will be in Kinshasa, with the remaining 41,228 located in the rest of the country. In addition, each voting site in Kinshasa is expected to accommodate 370 voters; those elsewhere in the DRC will have 600 voters per site. Thus, with these figures -- multiplying the number of voting sites by the number of voters expected (taking account of the differences between Kinshasa and the rest of the country) -- the CEI calculated that 27.9 million ballots were required. The CEI then ordered 50 additional ballots for each of the 49,746 voting sites in case some ballots were not delivered, were destroyed, or were otherwise found unusable. Adding these additional ballots -- which have already been delivered to voting stations throughout the country -- to the previous total, the CEI ultimately printed 30.4 million ballots.

-----  
MISTAKES WERE MADE  
-----

17. (C) Incorrectly printed ballots have similarly raised

unfounded criticisms and questions among Congolese political actors. Due to a variety of errors -- including the placing of certain legislative candidates on the wrong party lists -- the CEI has had to reprint nearly 782,000 legislative ballots in the provinces of Orientale, Bandundu, Western Kasai, and North Kivu. In addition, ballots in three of Kinshasa's four electoral districts had to be reprinted because they contained some material errors. While the CEI has not provided figures for the number of Kinshasa ballots needing to be reprinted, it is believed the number comes to around 2.2 million. Many critics have charged the CEI will keep these erroneous ballots in reserve to alter election results. The CEI, however, has announced that some ballots will be publicly destroyed in an effort to demonstrate transparency. The first such public destruction is planned to take place in Beni (North Kivu) on July 18.

-----  
COMMENT: REASONABLE EXPLANATIONS, BUT ARE THEY TOO LATE?  
-----

18. (C) While reasonable explanations exist for issues such as "extra" ballots and the need for special voting lists, the CEI has not communicated them in a clear, efficient or timely manner. Often, official CEI declarations attempting to clarify issues or popular concerns arrive well after the public's imagination has seized a particular question and rumors have been accepted as facts. Moreover, the CEI has proven itself largely ineffective in providing the public -- which lacks reliable, unbiased news sources -- simple answers concerning the political process; the CEI's answers more often than not make matters more complicated.

19. (C) Nonetheless, the CEI has provided answers for the majority of issues facing the electoral process. With regard to the problem of "missing" voters, the CEI has legitimately explained that nearly 900,000 such voters are the result of unforeseen technical errors, and enough data exists to justify the decision to allow them to vote. More problematic is the decision to grant the remaining 400,000 "missing" electors the right to vote, since there is no way to verify whether they are legitimately enrolled. Permitting these cases to vote, however, will not greatly affect election results, as they represent less than two percent of the overall electorate.

KINSHASA 00001153 003 OF 003

110. (C) When the CEI does respond to legitimate questions about the electoral process, the message is too late, ignored, or not believed at all. For example, had the CEI in May clearly explained the reason why "extra" ballots had to be ordered, weeks of political distraction and rumors could have been avoided. Instead, the issue now dominates political debate, crowding out legitimate issues. The DRC's electoral process is immensely complicated, and the logistical aspects are equally daunting for the CEI. If the country's elections and the electoral process are going to be deemed credible by the Congolese themselves, however, the CEI needs to take a much more proactive role in disseminating information early and often. Absent such efforts, though, there will exist an information void which electoral spoilers will race to fill. In any case, the CEI's leadership has demonstrated it is aware of the Commission's shortcomings, and is taking to heart lessons learned from the first round of elections in advance of the second round and for the elections in another five years. End comment.  
MEECE